

# Understanding the Healthcare Priorities of Patients with Incurable Head & Neck Cancer



- We were interested in finding out more about **people who are living with head and neck cancer** that can't be cured.
- Patients are often dealing with a number of problems such as pain, swallowing & speech difficulties.
- Patients are more likely to require multiple hospital visits than patients with other cancers.

## Where We Come In

We wanted to find out “where things did and didnt go as planned in the healthcare journey and try to find solutions that might help.



## What We Did

- **Followed 18 HNC patients** with incurable head and neck cancer, interviewing them every four months.
- **Invited family members** for interviews to also get their views.
- **23 healthcare workers** participated in group discussions, sharing frontline insights.
- **Ran 3 workshops** with a mix of healthcare workers and head and neck cancer patients to discuss, prioritise and generate solutions.

## What We Found



### Navigating the System

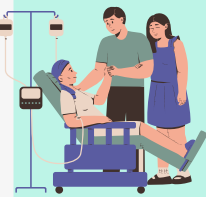


**Problem:** Some patients were uncertain about who to call, especially in emergencies when timely support is important.



**Success:** Knowing who and how to contact, with the ability to use different communication methods like WhatsApp, helped patients navigate the system.

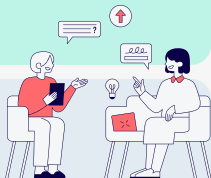
### Support for Family Caregivers



**Problem:** Families often felt overwhelmed providing care without training or emotional support.

**Success:** Proper guidance and knowing who to contact made caregivers feel confident & prepared.

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### Information & Communication

**Problem:** Too Much, Too Little, or Too Confusing; not all patients got the information they needed.

**Success:** Clear, timely updates; providing the right level of information for each patient was important to help make decisions.

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### Getting Medication

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**Problem:** Delays and miscommunications left patients and families feeling stressed and frustrated.

**Success:** Good links between GPs and pharmacists helped the process go more smoothly.



### Key Take-Home Messages



- **Having contact numbers** and knowing the roles different healthcare workers have in their care helps patients and family caregivers.
- Finding **ways to support family caregivers** is needed for well-rounded care.
- **Clear Communication** at the right level ensures patients aren't left in the dark.